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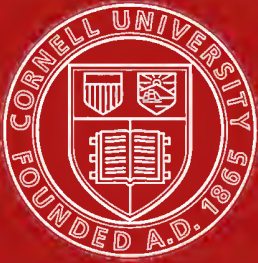
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MEMORIAL

OF

DAVID DIXON PORTER



David D. Porter

A
MEMORIAL
OF
DAVID DIXON PORTER
FROM THE
CITY OF BOSTON



BOSTON
PRINTED BY ORDER OF THE CITY COUNCIL.

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PRESS OF
Rockwell and Churchill
BOSTON

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CITY OF BOSTON.

IN COMMON COUNCIL, June 25, 1891.

ORDERED, That the Clerk of Committees be hereby authorized to prepare and publish a memorial volume containing an account of the services in Tremont Temple, May 14, 1891, commemorating the life and character of Admiral DAVID D. PORTER, together with the eulogy pronounced by Hon. JAMES RUSSELL SOLEY; that two thousand copies of said volume be printed, and that each member of the City Council be provided with ten copies, the remaining copies to be distributed under the direction of the Committee on Printing; the expense thus incurred to be charged to the appropriation for Printing Department.

Passed. Sent up for concurrence.

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN, July 13, 1891.

Concurred.

The foregoing order was presented to the Mayor, July 14, 1891, and was not returned by him within ten days thereafter.

A true copy.

Attest:

JOHN M. GALVIN,

City Clerk.

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DEATH OF DAVID DIXON PORTER

THE DEATH OF ADMIRAL PORTER.

THE death of Admiral DAVID DIXON PORTER took place at his residence, 1714 H street, Washington, D.C., on the sixteenth of February, 1891, and resulted from fatty degeneration of the heart, induced by a complication of disorders which had existed since the previous summer.

The news of his death spread rapidly, and was soon known throughout the country. A message was sent by the President to Congress announcing the sad event, and an order of the same import was issued from the Navy Department to the navy and the country at large. Arrangements were made for the funeral to take place on Tuesday the seventeenth of February, with the highest military honors, and for the interment of the remains at the Arlington National Cemetery.

The significance and importance of the death of the renowned naval hero was in a measure lost sight of from the fact that, by a remarkable coincidence, it occurred within a day of the death of the great general of the army, the beloved SHERMAN; an event which occurred on the fourteenth of February, and which absorbed the attention of the whole country, being fully expected from day to day and awaited with sorrowful anxiety.

That proper steps might be taken by the City Council, in recognition of the loss which the country had sustained by the death of these two brave and illustrious heroes, the

following order was introduced in the Common Council on the twenty-sixth of February, by Mr. WILLIAM B. McCLELLAN, of Ward 20, namely: —

ORDERED, That a Joint Special Committee, consisting of five members of the Common Council with such as the Board of Aldermen may join, be appointed to arrange for the delivery of eulogies on the lives and services of the late General WILLIAM T. SHERMAN and the late Admiral DAVID D. PORTER before the city government and citizens of Boston; the expense for the same to be charged to the appropriation for Incidental Expenses.

The order was passed by the City Council unanimously, and received the approval of the Mayor on the fourth of March. The committee was composed of the following members, namely: —

Aldermen BENJAMIN F. STACEY, NATHANIEL J. RUST, and JOHN H. LEE.

Councilmen MICHAEL J. TIERNEY, BOWDOIN S. PARKER, ANDREW J. QUINN, FREDERIC EATON, and JAMES W. O'BRIEN.

MEMORIAL SERVICES

MEMORIAL SERVICES.

THURSDAY, the fourteenth of May, was the day selected by the committee for the memorial services in honor of ADMIRAL PORTER, and by an auspicious choice the duty of pronouncing the eulogy was assigned to Hon. JAMES RUSSELL SOLEY, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, and a Bostonian well known for his literary attainments; his associations with the Navy Department and extensive knowledge of naval affairs making the committee's selection peculiarly appropriate.

The trustees of the Tremont Temple, with the generosity displayed by them upon former occasions of like character, tendered to the city the free use of their hall for the services, and their offer was accepted.

Official invitations to attend the services were extended to His Excellency the Governor and the members of his staff, the Executive Council, heads of State departments, United States officers, civil, military and naval, located in Boston, the members of the Massachusetts Naval Battalion, the members of the Kearsarge Association of Naval Veterans, members of the Grand Army of the Republic, officers of the Massachusetts Volunteer Militia, the judges of the Supreme, Superior and Municipal Courts, past Mayors of Boston, representatives of the press, members of the City Councils, heads of departments and city officials.

The platform in Tremont Temple was tastefully decorated

with plants and flowers; festoons of smilax intertwined with rosebuds adorned the front, and a beautiful basket of flowers covered the speaker's desk. The exercises commenced at three o'clock with a voluntary upon the organ.

His Honor Mayor MATTHEWS then arose and called upon the chaplain of the occasion, Rev. PHILLIPS BROOKS, D.D., who invoked the divine blessing as follows:—

PRAYER BY REV. PHILLIPS BROOKS, D.D.

O GOD, our Father, we bless Thee for the life and labor, for the name and fame, of the great man, Thy servant, whom Thou hast taken unto Thyself, and to honor whose memory we have convened to-day. Thou ordainest Thy servants to do Thy work upon the earth; Thou givest them some portion of Thy power; Thou appointest the tasks they are to perform; Thou biddest them work during their appointed day and then Thou recallest them unto Thyself, and they are gone and are seen no more of men. But they still live on the earth in the work they have done, and we know, O God, that the influence and the example of their deeds and their aims continually go forward for the benefit of future generations of mankind, and that the fruits of their lives, the result of Thy inspiration and guidance, are set among the treasures of the sons of men, to be continued and preserved forevermore sacred, as a precious heritage, to Thy honor and Thy glory.

And so it will be with him in whose memory we are assembled to-day. For all Thy servant's life

upon the earth, for what he did for the nation's welfare, in following out his convictions of duty, for the outcome of that struggle in which he took so great a part, we bless Thee, O God, to-day. We thank Thee for the preservation of this Union, for the firm establishment of this great, united government for which we believe Thou hast ordained the highest purposes for the good of the world. We thank Thee for the purification of our land from the blight and sin which have been upon her in the years past. We bless Thee for all the work Thou hast permitted Thy heroic servant to do in the years of his earnest and strenuous life, and we thank Thee also for the renewed inspiration which has been given to all the institutions throughout the length and breadth of our land by the efforts of him and others, through which we are enabled to know at the present day what it is to live in this land, for which Thou hast appointed such great issues and made possible such a great character. We thank Thee for his fidelity of purpose, for his faithfulness and unswerving devotion to duty, for his simplicity and steadfastness of life. We pray Thee that the generation that now is and generations yet to come may be worthy of the great services rendered by him and by others in the generation now passing away.

May those to whom Thou givest the duties and burdens of peace be the fit successors of those to whom Thou gavest the strenuous and laborious tasks of war. May we be worthy of our fathers. May,

those who come after us be taught to keep and treasure in their memories the example of this true hero and free man, who has in his day and generation assisted in doing that which has made possible for them this hour to enjoy the privileges of free men ; and may his influence be continually felt by the people of this entire land, by whom he shall be regarded as the type and representation of the men who have made possible a united nation, engaged in the arts of peace and rejoicing in prosperity.

Father, let Thy blessing rest on our country, — Thy country, — dear to us and, we believe, also dear to Thee. We thank Thee for the great works which Thou hast enabled us to perform and for the great possibilities yet unveiled which we believe Thou art to open up to the people of this land in the mysterious future. Give to the people of this land such steadfastness in the pursuit of duty, such earnestness of life and work, that they may be lifted up to perform whatever task Thou hast appointed for the days yet to come, and that they may accomplish Thy purpose and do Thy work in the upbuilding of Thy kingdom.

Now, let Thy blessing rest on this occasion. Lift us, we beseech Thee, to the spirit of the hour, to the contemplation of the true purposes of human life, to the conviction that life is not given for selfishness, not simply for the purpose of carrying out individual ends and aims, but for consecration to Thy service and for devotion to those great things

which are perpetual. May the things for which we live grow clear to us. May we rejoice in the peace for which war may be necessary, but in which war finds its only true result. May we rejoice in purity, truth, and righteousness, in the increasing happiness and perpetual growth of mankind.

Lift our souls, we beseech Thee, that they may hold communion with Thee and the mighty dead, that we may recognize Thy mercy, wisdom, and strength which rule the world. May this hour bring its inspiration to our souls and add something to the strength of our own lives and the life of the community of which we form a part. And O, our Father, as the years go on may every year mark the laying of a new stone in that great structure of human welfare, of human progress, which Thou art making for Thy honor and glory throughout the ages. May Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us each day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom and power and glory, forever and ever. Amen.

At the close of the prayer the "Ode to Our Naval Heroes," composed by Mr. HENRY O'MEARA, was sung with fine effect by a double quartette of male voices, consisting of the Ruggles-street and Boylston Quartettes.

ODE TO OUR NAVAL HEROES.

O VICTORS of war and of wave—

Themes that live in loved vision to-day—

Our song rings of valor and life-drops you gave,

Our pæans in glory repay;

Again with array of their pride,

Your Argosies burst on our view,

To tower above Treason and foes of the Tide,

To blaze for a Nation anew!

Not with navies in grim palisade,

Nor hordes in Armadas hurled,

But with armor of Freedom firm guard is made,

From our gateways, to ward off a world;

In War's chafings of sea and of strand

Your Knighthood our honor shall keep;

In their challenge of wrath and of strife to
our Land,

The brave duel shall dare on the deep.

Your Record to time shall not yield,

Bright emblazoned on river and main,

With those deeds for the flag shown on deck and
on field,

That defied aught of rending or stain.

As great billows now swell,—now are gone,—

Pealing long on their reach to the shore,

Your life-forms recede, but your fame surges on,

And in memory resounds evermore.

O Land fused in Liberty's fire,

Whose heroes are lit in thy flame,

Our thought with the pulsing their heart-throbs
inspire,

Is kindled in chanting thy name;

Our tributes aglow to each son,
With a soul that burned filial and free—
For the triumphs he wrought, for the trophies he won—
Are rolled up in praise sung to thee!

The following poem, written for the occasion by Mrs.
MARY E. BLAKE, was then read by Prof. J. J. HAYES.

PORTER.

Room among the Great Captains! Room
'Mid those of the land and those of the sea,
For one who stood on the quarter-deck,
Steering through fury of war and wreck,
With thunder of cannon and mortar boom,
While haven of peace lay far a-lee.

Fearlessly steering through danger and strife!
Welcome him Honor, with trumpet tones,
Who woke at the cry of his country's need,
To flower of valor and fruit of deed,
Till the calm, slow pulse of our colder life
Thrilled with the ardor of Perry and Jones.

Child of the ocean! Trained to prize
Air of the sea as his native breath,
Soul of its soul it was his to know;
Its passion above and its calm below;
The storm-swift action that strikes and flies,
Or holds to its purpose through life and death.

Brother and friend of chieftains he;
Grant and Sherman and Farragut
Knew that the chivalrous hand they clasped
Closed like their own on the thing it grasped,
Till the shell of the great Confederacy
Cracked, as a squirrel might crack a nut.

Speak for him, Orleans' letters of fire!

When his tree-crowned masts held the shore in
sight,

— Like the moving woods of Dunsinane, —

While prowess and pride of the foe were vain;
And the red levee as a funeral pyre
Flamed on the gloom of the April night.

Speak for him, Father of Waters! Thou

Whose waves to victory's crest upbore,

By river and plain and castled town,

Where Vicksburg brave from her height looks
down;

Till the land lay under his conquering prow

From Cairo's gates to the tide-swept shore.

Speak for him louder and clearer than all,

Glow of the generous heart and just

That ever was foremost to wrest from fame

Her laurels of praise for the hero's name;

That never was deaf to a comrade's call;

That never was false to a comrade's trust.

O Morning Land, thou art wondrous fair!

The dawn is glad on thy thousand hills!

Thine is the hope for the future's need,

With Freedom for gospel, and Peace for creed;

Stretched are thine arms to save and spare,

Balm of sweet healing thy touch distils;

Armorless art thou from head to heel;

Bare is thy breast to the death-smiting guns;

But who shall dare thee, while love is bold,

While treasure of heroes is richer than gold,

While stronger than armor of thrice-welded steel

Is that of the Nation which beareth such sons.

At the close of the poem the anthem "Rest" was sung by the Ruggles-street Quartette.

Mayor MATTHEWS then introduced the speaker.

Mr. SOLEY received a cordial greeting and was listened to with close attention by his audience.

The eulogy occupied a little over an hour in its delivery, and was an eloquent and fitting tribute to the great naval hero.

At the close of his address the speaker received a round of applause. A chant, "Let me know my end and the number of my days," was sung by the double quartette, and after the benediction the audience dispersed.

THE EULOGY

BY

JAMES RUSSELL SOLEY

THE EULOGY.

MR. MAYOR AND FELLOW CITIZENS : —

We have met here to-day, by invitation of the City Council of Boston, to commemorate the life and services of one of the most gallant and devoted sons of the Republic, the late Admiral of the Navy. Although born in Pennsylvania, and resident for the most part at his post in Washington, the admiral was a true scion of Massachusetts stock; and it is fitting, in this city, and in this State, above all others, where the race was bred from which he sprang, that his memory should be held in honor.

The Porters are preëminently a naval family. They count five generations and more than seventeen members that have been connected with the naval service. The admiral's ancestors, as far back as our knowledge goes, were seafaring men of Massachusetts, and they were ready at all times to fight for their country. The earliest of whom tradition speaks, Alexander Porter, born in 1728, became a merchant captain, and did service in the colonial wars. His two sons, David and Samuel, followed their father's calling. Both were commissioned in that embryo navy, organized by Washington, when conducting the

siege of Boston, to capture the storeships sent to supply the besieged garrison. Samuel Porter died in the Jersey prison-ship, of wounds received in action, and David became captain of the "Aurora," in the Massachusetts navy, and served throughout the Revolutionary War.

Upon the reorganization of the Federal Navy, Captain Porter was appointed a sailing-master, and in due time placed his sons in the service. The elder, David, born in Boston in 1780, became a midshipman in 1798. Serving with Truxtun in the "Constellation," during the French hostilities, and with Bainbridge in the "Philadelphia," during the war with Tripoli, he was taken prisoner with the other officers of that ill-fated ship. The outbreak of the War of 1812 found him in command of the frigate "Essex," a ship built by the merchants of Massachusetts, and destined under his leadership to win a name and fame only second to that of the "Constitution." On July 12, three weeks after the war broke out, she met and captured the "Alert;" and thus it fell to Porter to win the first in that brilliant series of naval victories that established, for all time, the tradition of American prowess upon the sea.

In the autumn of 1812, the "Essex" set out on her cruise in the Pacific—that romantic cruise which recalls the voyages of Drake, and Frobisher, and Hawkins, the mighty captains of the old Elizabethan days, when men went forth upon the distant seas in quest of glory, to live for months upon the enemy, without word from home or kindred. For eighteen

months the "Essex" scoured the Pacific, destroying or capturing the heavily armed English privateers, with which the sea was filled, and which had driven away American commerce. With a fleet of twelve stanch vessels which he had taken from the enemy, Porter established his station at the Marquesas, and at length returned to Valparaiso. Already ships of war had been sent out from England to meet him; and being attacked at a disadvantage by two of these, the "Phoebe" and the "Cherub," after an unequal combat lasting for three hours, with two-thirds of her people killed or wounded upon her decks, the "Essex" surrendered.

It was on the 8th of June, 1813, ten months after the victory over the "Alert," and while the "Essex" was still away in the Pacific, that David Dixon Porter was born. More than a year was yet to pass before the father, returning home with the fresh fame of his adventurous cruise, could look upon the face of this boy, who was destined, in the fullness of time, to achieve a fame beyond his own. The stirring scenes of war, in the midst of which that young life began, were a fit prelude to the drama in which the man was to be the chief actor. His boyhood, passed at his father's new home in Washington, served to crystallize the first fleeting impressions of infancy. The story of the great naval battles, already familiar as nursery rhymes, came to him with deeper meaning from the young captains who had fought them, not the least of whom was the commander of the "Essex."

When the lad was twelve years old, Commodore Porter, now commanding the West India squadron, took him on his first cruise. The squadron had been engaged in crushing out the pirates of the Spanish Main, and after three seasons of active campaigning, the work was now nearly done. It was the commodore's last service in the navy. The affair of Fox-ardo, constituting a violation of Spanish territory, led to his recall, and ultimately to his resignation. Unwilling to abandon his profession, he accepted the command of the navy of Mexico, then engaged in its struggle for independence, and, aided by his young nephew, Capt. David H. Porter, and other American officers, and above all by his own indefatigable energy, he brought order out of chaos, and under great difficulties created an organization and fitted out a fleet. But the American theory of discipline gave offence to Mexican officers, and it was idle for any man, and most of all a foreigner, to attempt to reform them.

It was in this organization that the future Admiral of the Navy, then a boy of thirteen, saw his first real service. His career as a Mexican midshipman began in the schooner "Esmeralda," commanded by his cousin, who was hardly more than a boy himself. The Mexican crew were little better than the pirates whom the United States had been fighting three years before. They hated their American officers with a fine ruffianly hatred, which soon broke out into open mutiny, and the young captain and his midshipman only saved their lives by the sternest measures.

After some months of commerce-destroying, Captain

Porter was transferred to the "Guerrero," a 22-gun brig. Taking with him his kinsman, the boy midshipman, he set forth on a roving cruise, and raided the coast of Cuba. The Spanish frigate "Lealtad," a 64-gun ship, put out to meet him, and the "Guerrero," unable to escape, joined battle. It was such a battle as gave delight to the Porter blood, which loved to challenge fate; such a battle as the "Essex" gave the "Phœbe" and the "Cherub" outside of Valparaiso, fourteen years before. For four long hours the brig kept up her fire, until at length, with her crew disabled, her decks a slaughter-house, and her hull riddled with shot, she was compelled to give up the hopeless struggle. A final broadside, fired from the "Lealtad" after the surrender, killed the young captain of the "Guerrero," and the victors stripped their prize, and carried her into Havana with her surviving officers and crew. Of most of these the names even are now unknown; but among them was one boy of fourteen, saved as a brand from the burning, whose fame was destined to live as long as history lasts, and who gained on the bloody decks of the Mexican brig that first lesson of heroic endurance, which was to bear fruit, many years after, on the banks of the Mississippi.

The death of his nephew, and the hopelessness of further effort to reform the Mexican navy, led Commodore Porter, soon after this event, to abandon the attempt. On his return home, he was appointed Minister to Turkey, at which post he passed the remainder of his life.

On the 2d of February, 1829, being then but fifteen years of age, but already a veteran in service, the boy Porter was appointed a midshipman in the navy of the United States. His early cruising was chiefly in the Mediterranean squadron, in the "Constellation," "Congress," and "Delaware."

The time was one of profound peace, and there was no opportunity, in those great ships of the line and frigates, that basked majestically in the sunshine at Port Mahon, or made leisurely cruises between the French and Italian ports, to put to use the fierce lessons of naval war that the boy had learned in the "Esmeralda" and "Guerrero." But the lesson had been well learned, and when the hour came the man would be ready. Meanwhile, in this period of repose from severer tasks, there was much to give the young officer breadth of view, and a harmonious development of mind and character. Between his two terms of European service, Porter was for three years attached to the Coast Survey — another sort of school, but one which gave its share of important professional training. As time went on, he was promoted in due course to a passed midshipman, and in 1841 to a lieutenant, a grade in which he remained for the next twenty years, and where we shall still find him at the outbreak of the Civil War.

In 1846, on his return from a confidential mission to San Domingo, Porter found the war with Mexico in progress, and lost no time in getting into active service. It was at the moment when the revolu-

tion in naval science, consequent upon the introduction of steam, was just beginning, and a few small gunboats had been fitted out for service in the war. To most officers at that time the steam-engine, as applied to warship navigation, was a thing to be avoided and discouraged. Porter, with his quick discernment upon all professional subjects, perceived the coming change, and obtained duty in the steamer "Spitfire," the flagship of the so-called Mosquito Fleet, commanded by the brave and generous Tattnall. She was only a diminutive gunboat, but there was not an engagement on the east coast in which she failed to bear a leading part. Running in under the batteries of the castle at Vera Cruz, while the fleet bombarded the city at long range, the little steamer kept her guns hotly at work, and no one on board could see the signal of recall from the flagship, until the commodore sent an aide to order her to withdraw. But Porter had seen a heavy fire before this, and he was one day to see a fire to which this was child's play; and he followed then, as always, the good maxim of Nelson, that no man can do wrong in getting close to the enemy.

With the treaty of peace it seemed as if all opportunity for naval distinction had come to an end. The desultory service that forms so large a part of an officer's career filled up the next twelve years. After a second tour of duty in the Coast Survey, Porter took leave of absence, and for four years was captain of a Pacific Mail Company's steamer.

Returning to active service, the best command that he could obtain was a storeship, and in 1858 we find him at the Portsmouth Navy Yard, the first shore duty of any duration which he had taken since entering the service.

Such was Porter's situation before the outbreak of the Civil War. Favorably known to his comrades, and gifted with a singular capacity for impressing those about him with the force of his stalwart intelligence, his advice and assistance were among the first to be sought upon all questions affecting the service. But his rank was an insuperable obstacle, according to the traditions then prevailing in the navy, to his advancement to any post of high responsibility. Although nearly fifty years old, he was still only a lieutenant, and in the eye of naval regulations he was not yet qualified for the exercise of command.

In an administrative system nothing makes rust so fast as routine, and at this period the demon of routine had taken possession of the navy. Half a century of peace, broken only by the brief and restricted operations of the war with Mexico, had sunk the service into grooves so deep and so rigid, that few men, especially among the older officers, were able to depart from them. The unbroken course of seniority promotion—a system that kills ambition and paralyzes effort—had made the upper portion of the navy list a reservoir for veterans, once gallant and vigorous, but now worn out by age and service. The absence of any provision for

retirement held them fast in their places, and stopping promotion tied their juniors, all the way down the list, to the exercise of the most subordinate duties. This condition of things the older men would not and the younger men could not change. Naturally, the commanding officers of that period did not look with favor upon the advancement of their juniors. Responsibility in subordinates was neither encouraged nor permitted, and a feeling of lethargy had begun to overwhelm these men who, whatever their energy and daring, and however keen their ambitions, were doomed to pass the best years of their lives in positions to which was attached neither honor, trust, nor opportunity.

In view of these circumstances, it is not surprising to find Porter, in 1860, discouraged and sick at heart, meditating resignation from the navy, and a return to his Pacific Mail command as a permanent employment. With this plan in view, the month of March, 1861, found him in Washington, about to start for San Francisco. But new work was at hand for the navy. In that month events were moving fast, and the projected journey was never to be made.

At the end of March a plan was set on foot by Mr. Seward, at the instance of Captain Meigs of the army, for the relief of Fort Pickens, then held by a handful of men. Calling Porter into consultation, they found him an eager coadjutor. Not only did he deem the plan feasible, but he was ready himself to undertake it. The President quickly

yielded to Seward's arguments and to Porter's contagious enthusiasm. Orders were drawn, which the President signed as commander-in-chief, giving the lieutenant full power to take any ship he wanted, supersede her captain, and fit her out for sea, and all officers were commanded to carry out his instructions, and under no circumstances to communicate the facts to the Navy Department.

This highly irregular proceeding, from which, on the ground of a supposed necessity for secrecy, the Secretary of the Navy was excluded, could only have been sanctioned by officials new to administrative business. But the question of irregularity did not concern Porter, who had a complete technical defence in the order of the President. Reaching New York on April 2d, the day after the conference, he found the "Powhatan" just stripped and out of commission, her engines taken apart, her officers on leave, and the vessel about to be docked for repairs. Four days later, on the 6th of April, she was steaming out of the harbor of New York under her new captain.

The Secretary of the Navy, who had designed the "Powhatan" for other service, learning of her departure, applied at the White House for a revocation of the orders, and a telegram recalling Porter was sent by Mr. Seward. It was delivered by a fast tug on board the "Powhatan" as she was passing Staten island. Porter's reply was characteristic: "I received my orders from the President, and shall proceed to execute them." The "Pow-

hatan" sailed on her expedition, the troops were landed, and Fort Pickens was relieved.

Porter now remained in command of the "Powhatan," setting on foot the blockade of the gulf ports. While lying off the passes of the Mississippi, he first conceived the idea of the expedition to New Orleans. He was satisfied that at that time the city could be captured even by a force comparatively small. His own ship could not, unaided, cross the bar at the river mouth, but his observation, and the information which he diligently gathered, convinced him that the place was vulnerable, while his comprehensive vision marked it out as the most important strategic point of attack in the Confederacy.

The dull routine of the gulf blockade, only varied by a cruise off Guiana, in pursuit of the "Sumter," was not the service that Porter wanted, and in November he gave up his command and returned to Washington. He was more than ever impressed with the importance of an expedition to New Orleans. The attention of the Navy Department had already been directed to this as a salient point of attack, but nothing had yet been done. Porter's knowledge of the situation, the intensity of his convictions, and his clear logical demonstration, enlisted upon his side all those who were in the higher councils of the Government, and the New Orleans expedition grew from a remote project into a concrete and established fact.

As the plan was developed, Porter was consulted

at every stage and his influence was marked upon every detail. He might, without difficulty, have obtained for himself the chief command. His opposition would certainly have negatived any choice to which he was unfavorable. But he made no effort to gain the post for himself, giving his hearty adhesion to the selection of Farragut, and reënforcing the Secretary's request by his own urgent persuasions.

The association between Farragut and Porter had begun far back in the past, an act of kindness done by the father of Farragut having led Commodore Porter to make young David Farragut his adopted son, and to procure for him an appointment in the navy. He took the boy-midshipman with him in the cruise of the "Essex," and gave him, notwithstanding his tender age, opportunities in which grown men would have been fortunate. These incidents led to a familiar intimacy between Farragut and the younger Porter, which lasted throughout their lives.

It was the fortune of these two men to attain a distinction during the War of the Rebellion far surpassing that of any of their comrades in the navy. If we compare them, it is only to show how each, in his own way, had the qualities that go to make a great commander, and how each, by his individual traits, won success in enterprises of equal danger and difficulty. Though rivals in the glory of the naval war, and in the affectionate regard of their subordinates in the service, no word or act of anger or ill-will was ever known to mar the har-

monious beauty of their fraternal friendship. The temptation to intrigue for a command which circumstances placed within easy reach, in an enterprise peculiarly his own creation, never influenced the younger man, ambitious as he was, to stand in the way of his older comrade. He preferred, as he said himself, to "earn his spurs."

I will not dwell upon the details of that wonderful expedition. The story is known to all of you, — how the mortar flotilla under Porter, its masts dressed with bushes to confuse the enemy's aim, lay drawn up in three divisions along the wooded shore, and for five days poured into Forts Jackson and St. Philip an unceasing torrent of exploding shells; how, after three days' bombardment, Farragut's keen eye discerned the possibility of running past the forts, and how, contrary to the advice of many of his captains, he decided to attempt the passage; how the gunboats of the mortar flotilla moved up the river, to a point opposite Fort Jackson, and silenced the water battery; how, under the terrific, murderous fire of Fort St. Philip, Farragut's fleet, the little "Cayuga" in advance, ran by the forts, destroying or disabling the vessels of the Confederate force, and at daybreak anchored in safety in the river above; and finally how it steamed up to New Orleans, and, lying in the stream opposite the levee, hoisted the flag and in due time delivered to the army the conquered city.

Porter, left below the forts, uncertain how far the naval force of the enemy — a force in which were

some ships far more powerful than his own — had been crippled by the action, continued his bombardment, and presently sent a summons to surrender. The demand was refused, and again the fight began, and continued until the ammunition of the flotilla was exhausted. Three days after the first refusal, the garrison of the forts, demoralized and mutinous, compelled their commanders to accept Porter's terms. The officers afloat, unable to withstand attack after the collapse of the land resistance, destroyed or surrendered their ships at the same time, and the victory was complete.

The Battle of New Orleans was the first step in the division of the Confederacy from the gulf to Memphis, which was finally consummated fifteen months later at the fall of Vicksburg. To Farragut belongs the glory of that successful achievement, but the assistance rendered him by the commander of the mortar flotilla was part and parcel of his victory. Greater, however, than that coöperation on the spot, efficient and loyal as it was, was the energetic influence which Porter had exerted to bring about the expedition. It may be that without him the enterprise would some time have been undertaken, and being undertaken, that Farragut's brilliant dash would have carried the fleet past the forts; but in paying to that great hero the homage that is justly due, we cannot forget the master mind that aided and supported him,—the mind which first conceived the plan, which carried conviction to the minds of others, which pushed the preparations with incessant ardor,

which gave its loyal coöperation at every step, and which pressed the enemy to a final surrender.

Efficient as was Porter's work in this campaign, its demands were not of a kind to bring out the full strength of his character and resources. A born leader of men, his place was not that of a subordinate. He followed the fleet up the river, and supported its advance when Farragut passed the Vicksburg batteries, then in an early and incomplete stage of development. But the mortar boats were now needed at the East, and Porter brought them back to Hampton Roads. With his return ends the first stage of his war service, and from this time on began the career which gave him a historic place beside the victor of New Orleans.

On the 1st of October, 1862, Porter was ordered to relieve Admiral Davis, in command of the Mississippi squadron. He had now received his promotion to commander, but for his new command he became an acting rear admiral. Except for this local and temporary rank he was still one hundred and fifty numbers from the head of the list. But with the future before him this was a small matter. The long period of subordinate duty was now forgotten. His was a nature that no routine could rust out. The burden of tradition that hung like a millstone around the neck of his seniors and contemporaries he cast aside as easily as he had cast aside Seward's order to return the "Powhatan." Nevertheless, it is little less than amazing to find

this man, yesterday a lieutenant plodding at his treadmill, to-day an admiral, placed suddenly in a position which, above all things, called for the inventive application of novel resources, rising at once to the level of the situation, emancipating himself from the shackles of routine, and conducting a campaign of unprecedented difficulty, upon a plan so novel and so original that nothing like it had ever been beheld before in the annals of naval warfare. Not only did Porter strike out and away from the beaten track, but he did it with such an instant readiness, such a prompt appreciation of the conditions of the new warfare, and such a resistless energy of action, as to make the Mississippi campaign the greatest study of naval war that modern times have seen. The old traditions of scientific warfare he cast to the winds. He had no more conventionality of method than a Mississippi boatman; no more slavishness to routine than the youngest midshipman in his fleet. With him the only impulse was to fight, and in fighting to win. As we look upon his conduct of those unique and magnificent operations around Vicksburg, we seem to see combined, the intrepid courage of Cushing, the careful preparation of a veteran staff-officer, the fertility of resource and dashing execution of Lord Cochrane, and the cool and calculating audacity of Nelson.

The first two months of Porter's command were devoted to the organization of his fleet, to supplying defects in its construction and equipment, and to enlarging it by the acquisition of new ships of suit-

able type. Such a war fleet had never been seen since navies first existed. In form, in arrangement, in armament, in modes of propulsion, in means of protection, every device that inventive ingenuity could suggest was adopted, regardless of time-honored conventionalities. The conditions of the warfare on the western rivers were alone considered. It was to meet those conditions that the fleet existed. Huge converted river steamboats, casemate ironclads and monitor ironclads built for the service, iron gunboats and wooden gunboats designed by Mississippi engineers, rams that Ellet had devised at the river cities on the Ohio, light-drafts so flat that their crews used to say that "they would float in a heavy dew;" strange craft armored with heavy plating, with railroad iron, with thin sheets which gave them the name of "tinclads," or with mere shields; propellers, side-wheelers, stern-wheelers, vessels with protected wheels in the centre,—were among the elements of this novel squadron. Diversified as they were, the admiral knew them all, and knew accurately each one's merits and defects.

The mode of fighting corresponded with the heterogeneous nature of the fleet. There was no chance here for the application of tactical rules. All those theories of combat upon which the navies of the world had conducted their battles since the days of Rodney and De Grasse, and even of Blake and Ruyter, all the tactical learning of the schools was useless in these narrow, winding streams in which the fleet was now to operate.

The objective point of the campaign was Vicksburg. A line of high bluffs, which the delays of the past year had enabled the enemy to fortify, had made Vicksburg the Gibraltar of the Mississippi. From attacks of the fleet alone it was impregnable. If conquered, it was to be the conquest of the army and navy combined; and Porter recognized the fact, and submitted to it. It would appear that his first principle in the whole conduct of the campaign was never to refuse a request that came from the army. However difficult the task, however perilous the situation, it was enough for the general to indicate his wishes, and Porter, in good faith, and with a courage and energy beyond all cavil, put the wish into operation, either to succeed or to demonstrate the impossibility of success.

When General Grant came down the river from Memphis, and the real campaign against Vicksburg began, the combined forces were above the city. On this side, for two hundred miles along the eastern bank of the Mississippi, stretches out the Yazoo delta, a long, oval valley, watered by the Yazoo and its tributary streams. As far as military operations were concerned, it was an impossible country, and it was little less than this for the fleet. Its interior, far away from the river, was richly cultivated, and served as a storehouse of supplies for the garrison at Vicksburg. But on the side next the river was a low-lying country filled with tangled canebrake and cypress swamps, cut up in all directions with interlacing streams and bayous, many of them

little better than ditches, their banks covered by thick forests, whose overarching tops shut out the light of day, and their winding course and devious connections bewildering to the unskilled boatman who might attempt to navigate them. The western bank of the river, by which as a last resort the army might descend below the town, and then crossing over attack Vicksburg from the south and east, was nearly as difficult of access, and would require laborious work in cutting out canals for the transports or in building roads for the army's march, which could only be accomplished when the waters subsided in the spring.

Three times the admiral sent expeditions to force a passage for the fleet into the Yazoo delta. The first was in connection with General Sherman's assault on Chickasaw bluffs, when the loss of the "Cairo," exploded by a torpedo, and the heavy fire of the forts at Haynes' Bluff admonished Porter to withdraw his fleet. The second expedition, cutting the levee at Yazoo pass, and overflowing the upper delta, made its way far into the interior by the swollen streams, but was turned back at Fort Pemberton. The third, or Steele's bayou expedition, was led by the admiral in person. Taking five of his ironclads, the flower of the fleet, he penetrated by a tortuous route through creeks and bayous, after incredible difficulties, into the heart of the delta. On either side the forest reached down to the black waters of the sluggish streams, and threw out overhead its twisted and interlacing arms. The gunboats,

striking first one bank and then the other of the narrow bayous, could hardly make four miles a day, ramming their way under full steam through the dense forest growth, or sending men ahead to fell the trees. Smoke-stacks were broken down, upper works were shattered, and rudders were disabled. As the fleet made its slow advance, and came into the open country, the inhabitants took alarm, and on all sides could be seen the smoke of burning grain and cotton. Detachments of the enemy, collecting on the banks in advance of the gunboats, threw down trees across the stream to block the way, until further progress became impossible; while others, bringing up sharpshooters and artillery, attacked the vessels from the wooded shores. The situation had become desperate, and the admiral gave the order to return. There was no room to turn the gunboats, and they dropped back stern foremost. But, meantime, the enemy had blocked the passage in the rear by heavy barriers thrown across the bayou. The admiral disposed his blue-jackets as best he could, some with axes cutting away the barriers, and others landing to drive off the enemy, while the shot and shell from his heavy guns ploughed their way into the forest. The troops detailed to accompany the expedition had been delayed; but at length these arrived, and the fleet, cutting its way through the last barrier, retraced its course and found itself once more upon the open waters of the Mississippi.

The army needed no further demonstration to show that Vicksburg could not be assailed by way of the

Yazoo delta. Indeed, it now appears, from what General Grant says in his memoirs, that all these desperate undertakings had been regarded by him as useful chiefly to give occupation to the force, and to meet the popular demand for action, during the weary weeks when he was waiting for the waters on the west bank to subside. All this time he had contemplated the movement by land to a point below Vicksburg, as his real plan of campaign, subject only to the possibility of an unlooked-for success in some of Porter's hazardous enterprises. But the new movement depended as much as the others upon the coöperation of the navy. To Porter, therefore, first of all, did the general make known his plans; and with that readiness he always showed for action, however dangerous or desperate it might seem, Porter fell in at once, and going even beyond the suggestions of the general, offered to undertake the preparation of the steamers that must run the batteries to serve as transports for the troops below.

The admiral proceeded with his preparations at once. The great Mississippi steamboats were loaded between the guards and boilers with bales of hay and cotton and sacks of grain. Barges innumerable had been collected from St. Louis and the cities of the Ohio valley to serve as ferry-boats, and these were utilized to carry down great stores of coal which the fleet would need below.

There had been many dashes of steamers past fortifications during the war before this date, and

others were made afterwards, but there was none in which more peril was involved than in the passage of the Mississippi fleet past Vicksburg on this April night. For fifteen miles of the winding river's course the fleet lay under the fire of the heavy guns that crowned the bluffs. As soon as the first vessel came within range, every gun upon the water-front opened fire. At intervals along the banks huge fires threw a ruddy light upon the stream, marking clearly the black outlines of the advancing hulls. The fleet dashed on, the admiral leading in his flagship, the "Benton," never pausing for an instant, but steadily pursuing his onward course under that terrific storm. Down the further side of the peninsula he passed, followed by five of the gunboats,—the "Lafayette," the "Louisville," the "Mound City," the "Pittsburg," and the "Carondelet." Next came three transports, each with its tow of coal-laden barges. The ironclad "Tuscumbia," the heaviest of the river fleet, brought up the rear. Reaching the sharp bend of the river opposite the town, and turning with the current, the fleet entered the narrow passage directly under the Vicksburg guns. The circling eddies at the bend, seizing upon the vessels in the centre of the line, whirled them round and round beneath the batteries, throwing them against each other in wild confusion, and for a short space involving them in what seemed a hopeless and inextricable mass. As they lay here entangled, the enemy's gunners, training their pieces with accuracy on the familiar range, hammered them incessantly.

Barges were sunk, or cut adrift by shot. The "Forest Queen," one of the largest transports, her steam-pipe cut through, became unmanageable, and collided with the "Tuscumbia." The gunboat extricated herself, and shot ahead, but finding the transport disabled, she returned, and took her in tow. Another of the transports, the "Henry Clay," taking fire from a shell that burst in her cotton ramparts, burned to the water's edge, and the gunboats standing by her took off her crew.

Still the "Benton" held on her course, with the fleet behind her, passing within forty yards of the Vicksburg shore, running directly through the plunging fire, and answering with her guns, though with little effect, upon the overhanging batteries. Shot after shot struck the vessels, crashing through the bulwarks, splintering the backing of the casemates, and entering the ports. But the gunboats still steamed on, and at length, by three o'clock, after a night the like of which was not seen again during the war, came to anchor in safety below the batteries of Warrenton.

The passage of Vicksburg left many scars upon the seven vessels, but the admiral, losing not a moment, repaired the damages while the army was marching down the west bank of the river. The thirteenth corps, under McClernand, had already reached a point well below Vicksburg, and lay opposite Grand Gulf, where the enemy had constructed heavy batteries. Grand Gulf is on a high bluff, at the foot of which runs the river. Its front

was as impregnable as that of Vicksburg, — indeed, it formed the lower end of that chain of fortifications of which Vicksburg was the beginning. Although its capture from the river was a hopeless task, the general wished to try its strength, and Porter, twelve days after the passage of Vicksburg, was ready to make the attempt.

On the 29th of April the gunboats, carefully disposed, although at a heavy disadvantage from the swift currents and whirling eddies of the river, attacked the fort at Grand Gulf. The batteries could not be silenced, but the fleet, at a distance of fifty yards, kept its place for six hours, under a heavy fire. The "Benton," the admiral's flagship, her hull battered by shot and her wheel disabled, became unmanageable. Still she did not leave the action, but drifting down, opened on the lower batteries, while her crew repaired her injuries. Finding that the fort could not be reduced, Porter withdrew, leaving the "Lafayette," his heaviest and most efficient vessel, to occupy its attention during the afternoon.

As soon as darkness covered the river, the gunboats, once more in motion, started down with their attendant barges and transports. They were discovered from the fort, and another battle opened as they passed. But the engagement of the morning had told heavily upon the enemy, and all got safely by. Then the whole fleet — ironclads, transports, barges, and all — began the work of ferrying the troops across, and by the next morning the enemy beheld

them safely landed at Bruinsburg on the eastern shore.

With this movement began the real campaign that ended in the fall of Vicksburg. For the next month General Grant was fighting his way in the country back of the river, gradually covering the whole stretch of territory in the rear of the city. The fleet was now disposed over a space of more than a hundred miles, with Vicksburg lying between the two extremities, so that communication must be made by land on the west bank. The admiral, ever on the alert, kept his eye fixed on every strategic point, and directed, personally, the movements of every vessel.

Not content with this heavy charge, while Grant was fighting his way in the interior, he ran with three of his gunboats down the Mississippi, and made a dash up the Red river to Alexandria, returning to Grand Gulf after a ten days' raid. Two days later he was back in the Yazoo, above the city, ready to coöperate with the troops which, having completed their wide sweep in the rear of Vicksburg, were now approaching the northern end of the main line of defences. The forts at Haynes' Bluff, which had so long prevented access to the upper Yazoo, fell into the hands of the fleet, and in a few hours communication was opened with the army.

Vicksburg was now encircled by the Union forces. On the east and south it was invested by the lines of General Grant, their right resting on the Yazoo,

their left on the Mississippi. Above and below the city lay the two fleets of gunboats, controlling all the water, except that short space directly under the bluffs, where no gunboat could safely lie.

All through this month of June the fleet was shelling the town and works on the river-front. From the north and the south simultaneously, a little cluster of vessels was each day engaged with those terrible guns that could not be silenced or dismounted. Whenever and wherever the army asked for coöperation it was given instantly. The "Cincinnati," sent down at the request of General Sherman to engage a gun that annoyed his troops, was sunk under the batteries. Cannon were landed from the fleet and placed in position in the rear of Vicksburg, and, under Selfridge first, and Walker afterwards, inflicted heavy damage. Another naval battery was thrown up on the point opposite Vicksburg. No opportunity was lost or effort spared to make effective the operations of the besiegers, but such was the unparalleled strength of the position that only by long and incessant labor could its defences be worn away. The persistence of the assailants found its match in the resolution of the defenders; but there was no loophole of escape, and on the fourth of July Vicksburg surrendered, and the Mississippi was open from the Ohio to the gulf.

For more than a year after the fall of Vicksburg the admiral remained at the head of the Mississippi squadron, the most extensive and exacting command

in the whole field of naval operations. It included in its limits not only the course of the Mississippi river above Baton Rouge, but all its tributaries east and west,—points far away up the Red river, the White river, the Tensas, the Black, and the Ouachita, in Louisiana and Arkansas, and on the other hand the Yazoo delta, and the whole course of the Ohio, with its great feeders in Kentucky and Tennessee. Every point in the navigable waters of this vast territory was covered by the squadron, and upon every detachment the admiral kept his alert and active eye. Watchful as ever of the needs of the army, he always had a gunboat ready when and where it was wanted. The operations of this immense and widely scattered force were controlled and directed by his personal care, and he struck his blows now at one point, now at another far away, with a celerity and certainty that made them tell with double force upon the enemy. The admiral himself was everywhere. His headquarters were on board the “Black Hawk;” but any vessel—ironclad, tinclad, wooden gunboat, or tug—was his flagship, provided she answered his purpose for the moment. His captains caught his buoyant spirit of self-confidence and his resistless energy of purpose; and he got from them such devoted and loyal service as few commanders have been able to obtain.

In the spring of 1864 occurred the ill-fated Red river expedition. It was no mere river raid, like that of the year before, but a great strategic move-

ment of the army and navy to crush out rebel control through the whole territory of northern Louisiana, and to destroy or capture the vast depot of supplies at Shreveport, on the upper waters of the river.

The admiral advanced rapidly up the river with ten of his gunboats, overcoming the difficulties in the way, while the troops pursued their march by land. Arriving at a point forty miles below Shreveport, Porter waited to hear from the army. Presently word came that a battle had been fought at Mansfield, and that the army was in full retreat. Into the causes of that movement we need not inquire here. The expedition was a failure, and only a prompt withdrawal could save the fleet from overwhelming disaster.

And now began that wonderful retreat of the Red river fleet, one of the most difficult and masterly operations that naval warfare has ever seen. The disappearance of the army had left both the river banks uncovered, and the enemy, although badly shattered in the battle of Mansfield, recovered their audacity when they learned of the departure of their assailants. Not many hours passed before they made their appearance on the bank, first to reconnoitre, and presently with artillery and infantry in force. Planting their guns at the most convenient points overlooking the river, knowing the country well, moving rapidly across the land where the windings of the river compelled the fleet to make a wide détour, and growing daily and hourly bolder in

their attacks, they harassed the gunboats with an unrelenting fire of musketry and artillery. Fighting its way thus mile by mile, and grounding incessantly in the shoal waters of the river, the fleet arrived at Grand Ecore, where the army had made a temporary stand.

But the worst was yet to come: from Grand Ecore to Alexandria was the most dangerous and difficult navigation of the river. The rapids above Alexandria were to be repassed, and the water had fallen far below the draft of the vessels.

The army now covered the banks, while the gunboats made their way cautiously to the head of the rapids. In this passage the "Eastport," one of the most efficient vessels of the river fleet, struck a hidden torpedo and sank to her gun-deck. The admiral resolved, if possible, to save her. Sending down for pump-boats, and removing the guns and ammunition, he worked with ceaseless energy for days, until the vessel was afloat. But shoal water checked her progress, and after running a short distance she ran hopelessly aground and was blown up.

Meantime the heavier vessels, with the transports, had reached the falls; and the army, marching without obstruction, was now sixty miles in advance. The enemy's troops, observing every movement, were beginning to show themselves and to hover in little parties about the banks. The devoted rear-guard, which had stayed behind to save the "Eastport," was composed of two small tinclads, the "Juliet" and

"Hindman," with the admiral's flagship, the "Cricket," a tiny gunboat whose light draft enabled her to move freely in the river.

The Confederate guerillas on the banks saw the situation, and laid their plans to capture the admiral. Already at the moment when the "Eastport" was destroyed they had made a dash to board the "Cricket," which was tied up to the bank; but the attack was foiled, and the little gunboat dropped out into the stream. The diminutive squadron, advancing cautiously but swiftly, was now steaming in close order and ready for action at any moment. Suddenly rounding a point they came in full view of a large force of the enemy, with a battery posted at a commanding spot. The "Cricket," now leading, was close under the fire of the battery before she knew of its existence. There was but one thing to do,—to go ahead at full speed and run the gauntlet of its fire. Retreat the admiral would not, and a moment's delay would reduce the paste-board gunboat into a thousand fragments. Every shot went through and through her. The vessels above, warned in due time, paused and took refuge above the point. Never was there a hotter fire than that which was now poured on the devoted "Cricket." The admiral himself fought the ship; he rushed to the gun-deck to hasten the firing, and as he reached it the after gun was struck by a shell, killing or wounding every man in the gun's crew. A moment later a second shell swept out of existence the crew of the other gun. Instantly the

admiral made up a new gun's crew from the negro deck-hands, and the loading and firing began again. A moment later the engine stopped, and hastening to the engine-room, Porter found the engineer standing, with his hand rigid in death, clutching the lever. He started the engine, and, sending for a relief, returned to the pilot-house, where one of the pilots had already been disabled. Here he remained, guiding his shattered boat until she passed the battery. Thirty-eight times had the "Cricket" been struck during the action, and half her people had been lost.

The remaining tinclads succeeded in making their descent, and the fleet, now reunited, was strong enough to resist attack. But the worst was yet to come. The rapids above Alexandria, four miles in length, were found to have only two feet of water, while the heavier gunboats drew six and seven. The army was encamped upon the banks, but it could not remain forever, and how to extricate his squadron, the choicest vessels of the Mississippi fleet, was a problem for which there seemed to be no solution. The admiral resolved that, whether the army stayed or went, he would defend his vessels to the last. "At this crisis," he says in his report, "there seems to have been an especial providence looking out for us in providing a man equal to the emergency."

The story of Colonel Bailey and his famous dam, by which the water was deepened on the rapids, is known to every school-boy: how the admiral eagerly

accepted the plan, though others doubted; how thousands of men were set to work, the country for miles around was stripped of fences and houses and timber, quarries were opened, flat boats were built, and the huge barrier, in eight days, had been carried out three hundred feet from either bank into the river, while the gate between was closed by coal barges sunk in the stream; how the flood of pent-up waters suddenly swept away the barges and poured in a torrent through the gate; how the admiral, mounting a horse, rode in hot haste to the upper falls and ordered the "Lexington" to try the passage; and how the vessel, steering at full speed for the gateway, rushed on her mad career into the surging waters, and rolling twice from side to side, seeming for an instant to hang upon the rocks, swept at last with the current into deep water and rounded to upon the shore; while cheer upon cheer went up from the thousands who, in breathless silence, had been watching the issue from the banks.

The smaller vessels having followed the "Lexington," wing-dams were built above the main barrier, deepening the mid-channel, and three days later the remainder of the fleet had passed the falls, and the Red river expedition was over.

In the autumn of 1864 Admiral Porter was transferred from the Mississippi to the command of the North Atlantic blockading squadron, to conduct the movement against Wilmington, now the last

foothold of the blockade runners. Savannah and Charleston had long been closed, but Wilmington, with its two entrances guarded by powerful forts, and its dangerous shoals, still gave access to the swift steamers that, laden with supplies for the Southern army, ran between Bermuda and the coast. The cordon of vessels around each entrance was unable wholly to stop the traffic, however vigilant their officers.

The main defence of Wilmington, Fort Fisher, was a work of unexampled strength. The lessons taught by four years of war had not been lost upon the engineers who built it. Rising up from the beach at the southern end of a long neck of land between the river and the ocean, its parapets mounted forty cannon, the heaviest of modern ordnance. Far away to the north stretched a level plain of sand, its edges washed by the Atlantic surf. The Confederates looked upon Fort Fisher as impregnable. Its guns frowning from the sand ramparts swept the beach, defying a land attack; while an attack by sea was hardly thought of, for the Atlantic shore from Hatteras to Cape Fear was not an anchorage that sailors loved. The general-in-chief, who from his headquarters at City Point directed all the movements of that marvellous campaign of 1864 and 1865, looked upon its capture as one of the essential features in his comprehensive plan of action. He had long since projected it, and the favorable moment had now come. Sherman, plunging into the heart of the Confederate territory, was about

to strike the sea at Savannah, whence his veteran army, flushed with success, could move northward towards Virginia. "If Wilmington falls," Grant wrote to him, "a force from there will coöperate with you."

Never before had it fallen to the lot of an American officer to command such a squadron as the great armada with which the admiral was now to attack Fort Fisher. It comprised five armored ships, headed by the powerful "New Ironsides;" three of the great screw frigates, the "Colorado," "Minnesota," and "Wabash," once the pride of the navy, but too large to have seen much service in the shallow waters where the naval war had hitherto been carried on; the side-wheelers, "Powhatan" and "Susquehanna;" and fifty other vessels, corvettes, sloops of war, and gunboats, — while a second fleet, composed of transports, was provided for the troops. Many there were outside the fleet, and some within it, who thought it madness to take such a squadron to lie, in mid-winter, off the Carolina coast; but the perils of the sea, which he was born to encounter, had no terrors for the admiral.

After one abortive attempt in December, whereof the causes of failure form no part of our story, for they concerned not the fleet or its leader, the transports sailed on the 6th of January. For two weeks the ships of war had been awaiting them, for Porter, having once begun, refused to leave the ground. The army was now commanded by that gallant and devoted son of New England, Gen. Alfred Terry.

Between the general and the admiral there existed perfect confidence and deep mutual regard.

At daybreak on the 13th of January the monitors went in alone to draw the fire of the fort and to disclose the enemy's guns. Then as the fort replied, the line was formed,—a magnificent array of sixty ships of war, mounting six hundred and twenty guns. Each ship steamed to her appointed place, the ironclads in the centre, and cast anchor close to the shore, forming a great half-circle. Without a pause or break they took their stations, while the "Malvern," the admiral's swift flagship, steamed up and down the line and in and out, the commander-in-chief standing, a conspicuous mark, upon the paddle-box and directing every movement. As each ship took her place, her battery opened, and soon the whole of that mighty fleet was pouring shells into the fort.

All day long the fire continued, and the next day, and the next. Under its cover eight thousand troops were disembarked. The Confederate gunners fled from the fire of the fleet to the bomb-proofs, and one by one their guns were disabled, until only four were left out of twenty, in the northern face. As the fort was gradually silenced, the Union forces, throwing up intrenchments, worked their way slowly down behind the shelter of the river bank.

On the third day, the lines having advanced close to the fort at its inshore end, all was ready for the assault. Two thousand seamen and marines had landed from the fleet to make a diversion that would draw the garrison away from the main at-

tack. It was a forlorn hope, this charge of the blue-jackets; for they had no sufficient weapons, and the beach where they advanced gave little shelter. Halting outside of rifle range they waited for the signal. At three o'clock it came, and with a rush the two columns, the troops at the west end, the sailors at the eastern bastion, charged upon the land face of the fort. The defenders massed themselves upon the bastion, and, protected by the parapet, poured their fire upon the sailors. They rushed along the open beach, swept by a storm of bullets, till the head of the column was checked by the palisades at the foot of the rampart. Gallant as was their advance, no man could stand long in the open space under that murderous fire, which swept down every minute a score of men; and at length the column broke and turned, and the naval assault was ended.

But the sacrifice of those who fell upon the beach was not made in vain. While the garrison was occupied with the naval assault, the army, with better arms and under better cover, swarmed up to the fort, and gained an entrance through the sally-port. The battle for the traverses raged through the short daylight and far into the darkness of the January afternoon. The admiral, informed by signal of every movement, altered the direction of his guns as each traverse was carried, and adjusted his fire with exactness to each new position. Long after darkness had closed in the last vestige of resistance came to an end, and Fort Fisher was captured.

During the next few months Porter continued in command of the North Atlantic squadron, coöperating as of old with General Grant, in giving the final death-blow to the Rebellion. With the fleet he fought his way up the Cape Fear river to Wilmington, and after all its defences had fallen turned his attention to the James river. The closing scenes of the great drama found him at Richmond, which he entered with the President on the day after its fall.

The war ended, Porter found a congenial post as Superintendent of the Naval Academy. Fresh from his victories, promoted to be Vice-admiral of the Navy, and having three times received by name the thanks of Congress, he was the idol of the cadets, the living impersonation of all those professional qualities that mark the great naval commander, and surrounded with an atmosphere of martial glory, not misty or traditional, but fresh and brilliant with the recent splendors of victorious war. With the admiral there came to the academy his Vicksburg captains, Selfridge and Walker, Breese and Ramsay, Fitch and Greer, still young in years, but veterans in service, a gallant and brilliant staff. Never before or since was there a training school for naval war like that which Porter and his captains called into existence at Annapolis from 1865 to '69; and of the young men who breathed that heroic atmosphere,—more than one-third of the list of line officers as it stands to-day,—there is not one but

has carried with him into the service a more eager purpose, a more alert professional judgment, a stronger character by reason of the influence of those days at the academy.

At the beginning of General Grant's first term in the Presidency, Porter was assigned to duty at the Navy Department, and for a short time became the virtual head of its administration. The death of Farragut, in 1870, left him easily foremost among the survivors of the naval war, and in the following year he became the Admiral of the Navy.

When war with Spain was imminent, in 1874, he was at once selected to command the fleet, and entered eagerly upon his preparations; but the crisis was safely passed, and no occasion arose for calling the veteran into active service.

During the remaining years of his life the admiral, as President of the Board of Inspection, maintained an active supervision of the fleet, though not connected with its administration. In this period he was busily engaged in writing, chiefly on professional subjects. In such peaceful occupations he spent his time until, at the age of seventy-eight, full of years and of honor, he passed away to his eternal rest.

In his professional character the admiral was a typical officer. He was a well-tempered man. With nerves of iron, and an organization to which the sensation of physical fear was absolutely unknown, no shock could startle him, no sense of

personal danger could alarm him, no risks could seem to him too great for the attainment of a great object. In physical endurance and in capacity for work his powers seemed to have no limit. At Grand Gulf he fought in the morning a 'six-hour engagement, one of the hottest of the war, himself giving and taking incessant blows; in the afternoon he made the preparations for the fleet, while the "Lafayette" engaged the fort; in the evening he ran past the batteries with the gunboats and the transports; and for the whole of the night, under his supervision, the fleet was at work ferrying the army across the swift current of the Mississippi and landing it upon the eastern bank. It was a hereulean task, but it was the general's wish to hasten, and Porter responded promptly; and when morning broke the enemy found the army established in his rear.

This was only one of many instances of Porter's physical endurance. For two years he directed the movements of that immense and scattered force, keeping his eye upon every detail, and himself led in person the most perilous undertakings. What admiral but Porter, commanding a force of over a hundred vessels, whose operations extended over two thousand miles of tortuous rivers, would have taken the gunboats himself through Steele's bayou, and seen them safely out? Or what one would have stopped a week in the Red river to save the "Eastport," and have brought the rear-guard through its perils in such a flagship as the "Cricket"? Wherever his own leadership was needed, he put him-

self, no matter what the danger, in the forefront of the battle. It has been said that good luck brought Porter through his reckless undertakings. Good luck he doubtless had in escaping personal injury, though he often came close to it. It was good luck, for instance, that when once sitting in his cabin in the "Benton" he was called suddenly away, and no sooner had he risen, than the chair in which a moment before he had been seated was struck by a shot. These things are the chance of war, about which no man can reckon. But there was no luck in the measures that at critical moments ensured the safety of the fleet. Marvellous as seemed the boldness of those movements of the Mississippi squadron, it was a cool daring, a calculating audacity, and an unerring military eye for the situation, taking in all that made it strong or weak, that directed their guidance. And when those crises came, as come they must, in which it is the unforeseen that happens, the admiral placed his last reliance on his own energy and resource; and these never failed him.

To his officers Porter was the ideal commander. No man could so well combine the large view of an extended command with the close direction of a particular movement. His intercourse with his captains was full and free. They were made familiar by constant conversation and discussion with his aims and methods, and when the time came for work to be done, they knew, without being told, what the admiral wanted. He never hampered his subordinates

with minute instructions; often he gave them no written orders. He told them simply that a thing was to be done, and left them to find the way to do it. Stimulated thus by the confidence of their commander, and not being reduced to depend upon his judgment at every turn, the Mississippi captains developed their own powers, and gained a self-reliance and a capacity for individual action, that won glory for the squadron, and a lasting benefit for themselves and the service in which they were some day to exercise high command. If they succeeded, no matter how, they got full share of the credit, for the admiral never failed in his reports to praise his officers by name according to their deserts. If they succeeded by their own devices, so much the better for them. If they erred through excess of zeal, or even through an error of judgment, the admiral readily forgave them; but for slackness or timidity he had little mercy. For severity of discipline, however, he had but slight occasion; under his system each man gave spontaneously the best of which he was capable.

It is not enough to say of Porter that he trained his officers: he did more, he created them. And this quality, mark you, is one to be found only in great commanders. It was no mere accident of fortune that made Napoleon's marshals, or Nelson's captains, or Porter's lieutenants: it was the creative force and energy of the commander-in-chief.

In the admiral they found not only their guide, but their model. He was a born fighter. His splen-

did audacity, his untiring energy in preparation, his arrow-like swiftness and certainty of execution, made him, in their eyes, the greatest naval commander of the age. At the most critical moments, when others became confused in mind or dejected in spirit, the great admiral rose above the crisis; his judgment only seemed to work more clearly, his spirits only became more buoyant, and men were shamed out of their terrors, and forgot their perplexities in admiration of that heroic figure, ready to accept every challenge, however desperate the chance, whether of men or fortune. The fleet and the army alike knew his worth. No petty jealousy of the sister service ever marred his cordial and hearty coöperation. Had he been under the general's orders, instead of exercising, as he did, an independent command, he could not have given him more loyal service. "I have served with Admiral Porter," wrote General Grant to Terry, before the Fort Fisher expedition, "and I know he has the nerve and judgment to carry out whatever he proposes."

There was one noticeable trait in the admiral which he showed on many occasions, often the most desperate. It was a singular vein of sardonic humor, not malevolent or wicked, but born of an impish audacity. He doubtless knew well its effect upon the men around him, and he did not hesitate to use it with a telling force and directness, whether of speech or act, to encourage, to rouse, to stimulate, and sometimes to condemn. When the squadron

on the Mississippi was dismayed by the capture below Vicksburg of two of its best vessels, the "Queen of the West" and the ironclad "Indianola," Porter conceived the idea of running a mock monitor, constructed from a scow surmounted by pork barrels and a mud furnace, past the batteries. Under cover of what seemed a stupendous practical joke, he unmasked the enemy's guns, which poured a tremendous fire upon the dummy as she drifted slowly by. Below the forts, she ran upon a snag, and the "Queen of the West," stationed as an outpost, took to flight, while the people on board the grounded "Indianola" blew up her guns and abandoned the vessel. At Fort Fisher, while the fire of the fort was at its hottest, Porter, making one of his rapid visits to a vessel in the line, went below to see the gun's crews at their work. Shots could be heard screaming through the rigging, and the captain remarked, with concern, that the admiral's flag, which was hoisted during his presence on board, was making the ship a target. "That's good," said the admiral, who was used to being a target; "come up on deck and see what kind of a mark we make." Once, in the Cape Fear river, when a young captain was visiting the flagship, he incautiously criticised the movements of one of the gunboats, at that moment hotly engaged with a Confederate fort above. "Young man," said the admiral, "you go right up there with your ship, and show us whether you can do better;" and the young man obeyed the order. When one of his cap-

tains before the attack on Fort Fisher represented that he ought not to go into action, because his vessel was out of repair, and likely if struck to sink at her anchors: "You are just the men we want," said the admiral; "we'll tow you close in to the beach, right under the fort, and when you sink at your anchors, you will sink in shoal water, and you can lie on the bottom and just hammer away at the enemy!"

The men who fought with Porter believed in him, and they held him their foremost man. "Among naval officers," said General Grant on one occasion, "I have always placed Porter in the highest rank." History will not reverse this judgment. Doubtless, in the period just following the war, Farragut filled a more definite place in the popular mind; he was the first Admiral of the Navy, and his personality gained distinctness from the dramatic and sharply cut incidents of his three great battles. Porter's fighting was of a different kind, more novel and difficult, and taxing more severely the powers of the commander. Farragut's career in the gulf squadron was condensed into three supreme moments; Porter's on the Mississippi was the incessant labor and struggle of two years. I would not draw comparisons between these two men, so closely bound together by early ties, so preëminent above their comrades in the distinction which they reached in later life. To both their country points with equal pride. Both had passed the middle span of life before achieving marked distinction. But they had

learned their fighting lessons and shouldered their burdens of responsibility before they passed the threshold of their manhood. This was, beyond all question, one secret of their success. The child is father of the man. The battles of New Orleans and Mobile were begun on the cruise of the "Essex," and on the deck of the "Guerrero" was the first dawn of that light which burst into noonday splendor at Vicksburg and Fort Fisher.

In private life the admiral was a devoted husband, an indulgent father, tender and gentle as a woman to distress and misfortune. His manner was simple almost to boyishness. His confiding nature led him to trust readily his fellow-men. Impulsive and easily aroused, he was quick to acknowledge a benefit or to resent an injury. But his resentment vanished the moment his antagonist yielded, for there was neither malice nor bitterness in his nature.

During the years following his withdrawal from active service, the admiral exerted himself without ceasing to bring about the reconstruction of the navy ; and however he may have differed with others about details, his influence had a material effect in stimulating that movement, little less than a revolution, which has converted our decrepit fleet into an efficient and modern force. In every detail of the programme he took the most active interest, and for the reforms in naval affairs that took place during this time he had the warmest commendation. No man knew better than Porter the strategic necessity for a navy in the United States, and he

knew that unless it was efficient it was worse than useless.

As to this strategic necessity there must be few men who do not share the admiral's opinion. That the development of this country will meet with any decided check from foreign aggression is improbable; but it is improbable because the practical good sense of our people will insist on the maintenance of efficient means of defence against aggression. We hold rightly that a large standing army or navy is contrary to the system of our Federal republic; but while we give way to no dreams of foreign conquest, and tolerate no proconsular theories of domestic administration, we believe in a national government powerful enough to represent the might of a great nation behind it, and to vindicate, when the occasion comes, the majesty of national right. It may not be that Providence is always on the side of the strongest battalions; but it is at least tempting Providence to rely alone on the good cause, and meanwhile to neglect the strong arm. For a State isolated from the rest of the world, with an immense maritime frontier, and with sea-coast cities, the repositories of national and individual wealth, the navy is the right arm of defence. Upon the efficiency of its officers and its vessels depends the safety of great interests essential to the prosperity of the United States. This principle has at last obtained recognition, and the fleet has emerged from the condition of decay into which it had fallen in the period of relaxation following the Civil War. And I believe

that the recent steps in administrative progress in the building of cruisers able to keep the sea, and battleships able to fight at sea; in the employment of labor in government yards and workshops on a basis of merit; and, finally, in the creation of a reserve force, a naval militia of the States, trained to war, but continuing the pursuits of peace, in harmony with our true American system,—will make these later years memorable in the annals of naval development.

As the great record of the Nation's future is unrolled, and its early history is projected further into the past, our children and our children's children will cherish more and more its sacred traditions, will turn more and more to contemplate the heroic figures of the men who founded the Republic, and who stood firm for the right, upholding its constitution and its principles, at every crisis of its history,—the men great in council and in administration, who set the standard of civic virtue in the public life of America for all the generations to come. They will cherish too, with equal reverence, and with a tenderness that befits their sacrifice and self-devotion, the memory of those other heroes, the men who at the peril of their lives fought the enemies of their country upon the land and sea. And if to-day we dwell especially upon the achievements of one branch of the national force, it is not that we forget the sister service, to which we render equal homage, but rather because this occasion is consecrated to the navy and to the memory of its illustrious dead. We call up the names of

those great captains of the earlier wars, — names familiar to us from our childhood, names that will live forever in song and story. We go back to the days of the Revolution, to Paul Jones, and Barry, and Barney, and Dale, who, like their great contemporaries in civil life, set the first example of those qualities that have ever since adorned the service, the seamanlike qualities of obedience and courage, and prompt decision, and the gentlemanlike qualities of self-devotion and self-control. We call up the picture of Truxtun fighting the French in the West Indies and capturing the "Insurgente," and Preble rooting out piracy in the Mediterranean, and redeeming his countrymen from captivity at the cannon's mouth. We see again the glories of that glorious war of 1812, whose trophies deck to-day the halls of the academy at Annapolis; those four-and-twenty ensigns, now dingy and time-scarred, their edges worn by age, but once floating proudly above the decks of the "Guerriere," the "Macedonian," and the "Java," of the vessels on Lake Erie and Lake Champlain, and of many another captured sloop and frigate. We recall the time when Hull and Decatur and Bainbridge annihilated three of their antagonists in the first months of the war; and when victory after victory of the derided American ships startled the Admiralty into the issue of that secret order, which recent memoirs have disclosed, that only ships of the line should engage American frigates. Last of all, we come to the men of the Civil War, to names even dearer and more familiar, — to Farragut and

Du Pont, Rowan and Winslow, Rodgers and Worden and Cushing. In this constellation of naval heroes there are none that shine with brighter lustre than the two Porters,—the great commodore who made his cruise in the “Essex,” and for twelve months held the Pacific with his fleet of captured privateers ; and his greater son, the admiral who fought the campaign of Vicksburg, who extricated his gunboats from the perils of the Red river, and who led his great squadron to victory at Fort Fisher. And we may rejoice, my fellow citizens, exulting as we do in the traditions of this our dear old Commonwealth, that it was their heritage of Massachusetts blood, and of that native energy which grows upon the soil of New England, that placed these two men among the foremost of the great captains of their time.

On the grassy slope beneath the historic mansion at Arlington, before which, spread out as in a panorama, lie the noble river, and the glistening expanse of the capitol, and the fair white shaft of the monument, pointing heavenwards over the city where he loved to dwell ; surrounded by his comrades, the heroic dead who fought like him in defence of the Union,—the admiral lies at rest forever, the last struggle over, the last victory won. Upon his grave to-day we place our civic wreath ; and this tribute to his memory, fitly paid by our fair city, the mother of his ancestral line, we also pay, as children of one common country, which claims him as her own,—as men who value above all other possessions the

birthright of an American citizen, which he fought to preserve, in all its matchless worth, for us and our posterity. His glory belongs to the Republic. In her service his days were spent; for her he wrought out those mighty enterprises wherein, counting his life as naught, he put forth all the powers of his heroic manhood. The little branch of laurel that we bring is but one spray in the garland of his eternal fame; for as long as this nation lasts, as long as there shall be Americans who turn in reverence to the immortal figures of their country's past, the memory of the great admiral will be held in highest honor; and for all time to come, upon the roll of its illustrious citizens, who in peace or war have deserved well of the Republic, will be inscribed in golden letters the name of DAVID DIXON PORTER.

FINAL PROCEEDINGS

FINAL PROCEEDINGS.

AT the meeting of the Common Council, May 18, Mr. McCLELLAN, of Ward 20, introduced the following resolve, which was unanimously adopted, namely:—

RESOLVED, That the thanks of the City Council be and hereby are extended to Hon. JAMES RUSSELL SOLEY, for the able and instructive eulogy pronounced by him upon the life and character of the late ADMIRAL PORTER, at the memorial services held in Tremont Temple on the fourteenth instant, under the auspices of the City Council.

The Board of Aldermen at their meeting on the same day concurred with the Common Council in the adoption of the resolve, and it was approved by the Mayor on the twentieth of May.

Also on the twenty-sixth of October the following resolutions were adopted by the Board of Aldermen, namely:—

RESOLVED, That the thanks of the City Council be hereby expressed to the Rt. Rev. PHILLIPS BROOKS, D.D., for performing the duties of chaplain at the memorial service at Tremont Temple, May 14, 1891, in honor of Admiral DAVID D. PORTER.

RESOLVED, That the thanks of the City Council be hereby expressed to the trustees of Tremont Temple, for their courtesy in allowing the city the free use of their hall for the memorial service, May 14, 1891, in honor of Admiral DAVID D. PORTER.

The Common Council concurred with the Aldermen, October 29, in the adoption of the resolutions, and they were approved by the Mayor, October 31, 1891.

